



MEMO

TO: Delegates to the 2024 NEA Representative Assembly

FROM: Rebecca S. Pringle, President
National Education Association

DATE: June 2024

RE: NEA Media Campaign Fund

Attached is the annual report on the NEA Media Campaign Fund for the 2023 – 2024 NEA fiscal year as required in Bylaw 2-7n.

The annual membership dues of active members of the association, as computed pursuant to Bylaw 2-7.a, includes \$20 which is allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund. Sixty percent of the dues were allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises Fund and are available to assist state affiliates in dealing with ballot measures and legislative crises, and 40 percent are available for national and state media campaigns.

The NEA Media Campaign Fund includes two components. The first provides funding for national campaigns to advance the cause of public education and publicize the role of the association and its affiliates in improving the quality of public education. The second provides funds for grants to NEA state affiliates for communication campaigns created and directed by state associations.

This report provides a summary of fund activity since the 2023 NEA Representative Assembly (RA).

Attachment

NEA MEDIA CAMPAIGN FUND

ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 2024

SUMMARY

The NEA Media Campaign Fund is allocated into two separate funds, a national campaign fund and a state affiliate campaign assistance fund. The promotional efforts supported by these funds have helped to positively position NEA and its affiliates as leaders in the cause of providing a high-quality public education for every student, regardless of ZIP code. Administration of the funds falls under the responsibilities of the NEA Center for Communications (CFC).

NATIONAL BRAND PROMOTIONS

NEA is continuing the paid promotion of the NEA brand campaign; an effort to engage parents around NEA's vision and policy priorities for public education across the country, which is particularly important during an election year. We focus our target audience for the brand campaign on BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) parents and grandparents in priority electoral states. We reach our audiences through multi-channel campaigns during key moments throughout the year (For example, Read Across America [RAA] week, back-to-school season, etc.) paired with topical ongoing search ads throughout the year. Our targeting leverages first- and third-party data to capture parents and grandparents.

Throughout the 2023 – 2024 fiscal year, more than 32.9 million parents and grandparents were reached through NEA's advertising program, up from 16 million parents the year prior. Influencer video content has continued to be the most effective creative strategy for driving engagement and actions from parents and grandparents across campaigns. Given this, social platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok) have been the star of our program, with engagement rates consistently exceeding industry benchmarks.

The National Media Fund also continues to support the association's efforts to rebrand the Read Across America program to continue to be more inclusive and focused on teaching the truth. This year, we leaned into direct, action focused advocacy language to acquire new parent and grandparent activists, while also pushing out the joy of reading and positive messaging. Both of which paid off in a huge way. We acquired over 50K activists with a petition fighting against book bans driven by conservative agendas nationwide and drove some of our strongest web traffic we've seen during a brand campaign to the RAA web page. The RAA page continues to provide digital resources, new recommended books, and activities for members and the public, to promote the program and be at the forefront of the conversion when it comes to the joy of reading and kids seeing themselves in books.

Since June 2023, the brand campaign has focused on a few tentpole moments; the back-to-school period, American Education Week, and Read Across America. Looking ahead, the campaign will focus on Teacher Appreciation Week, and another back-to-school program in August.

PUBLIC AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

The NEA engaged in several projects to promote public education initiatives and defend against attacks on public schools and our members.

The fund helps shape numerous campaigns and initiatives through intense listening of key audiences, so we understand where they are, what they care about, how to persuade and mobilize them. We've invested these funds to better understand various audiences.

We have used the National Media Fund for our SWAT program, where we partner with state affiliates to support strategic communications campaigns that work to promote and protect public education. The SWAT program provides remote and on-the-ground communications support through an expert campaign communicator. Opportunities to engage with states come in many forms, but our goal is to increase the short- and long-term capacity of an affiliate while providing strategic and tactical support when they are presented with threats and opportunities. A prime example this past year was our partnership with the Tennessee Education Association (TEA) to support their work during the legislative session to amplify how the vouchers will shortchange students and educators. NEA partnered with TEA to provide additional strategic planning and execution for a communications plan while helping to communicate with the public about the value of public schools and the problems with schemes to defund them.

As part of our continued issue accountability work, we are creating content to drive our narratives around public education and delivering this content via paid and social media to key audiences, including parents. NEA has also driven accountability strategies that educate the public while also partnering with state affiliates to organize members to create and deliver content to their in-state audiences.

NEA continues to partner with allies at Media Matters to help hold media accountable, shine a spotlight on disinformation and misinformation and to ensure that bad actors who have an anti-public schools/union agenda are exposed.

NEA amplified our Healthy Students work by educating opinion makers, parents, and families about the need to support, fund, and advocate for resources for students with disabilities. We ran promotional assets and hosted an event to drive home the importance of advocating and funding programs for disability rights.

NEA continues to partner with ParentsTogether to engage and mobilize parents. We have successfully partnered with them to engage parents to sign petitions and contact leaders on a wide range of NEA priorities and help us expand our digital capabilities.

We've used this resource to continue a content planning software platform to coordinate promotional tools and performance analysis and look at our various content distribution channels by audience, priority areas, and issues.

NEA MEMBER INFLUENCER PROGRAM

NEA recognizes that our members are the best ambassadors for our message, with the greatest potential to influence conversation within their networks, and beyond. The program, launched in the spring of 2022, has quickly become an important communications strategy to amplify NEA's reach and relevance online.

The member influencer program grew substantially in 2023. We worked with 60 member influencers to produce 119 individual videos for Instagram and TikTok. These 119 videos generated 1,884,268 views, 252,731 likes, 5,878 comments, and 4,389 shares. This high-performing content was also leveraged in paid advertising to dramatically increase views for key campaigns including Read Across America, the summer EBT program, and NEA Today articles. The program is continuing in 2024, focusing on diversifying the pool of member creators who regularly make content, supporting state affiliate programs, and focusing on "Strike Ready" content during key organizing moments.

In addition to contracting member influencers for specific campaigns, we grew our cohort program, now called the NEA Creator Collective: a year-long commitment with a guaranteed number of videos with our top 9 creators. The collective launched in February 2024 at the NEA headquarters where creators came together to receive a briefing on pro-union messaging and had an opportunity to meet with President Becky Pringle. The collective has quarterly

meetings to receive the latest in tested pro-union messaging guidance and for NEA staff to hear ideas for content directly from the member influencers as part of this initiative.

ADVANCE RACIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION

NEA continued to engage on our priority work in Racial Justice in Education through thoughtful and meaningful engagements that connect cultural touch points, the arts, and our members' and students' voices to clearly articulate this important work and push back against destructive books ban policies and attacks on our democracy.

Read Across America partnered with a host of allies to uplift and support the Freedom to Learn content, participated in the American Library Associations' mid-winter conference with author book signings, created 4 exclusive Little Free Libraries celebrating 50 years of Hip Hop to be placed in underserved communities, developed Asian American and Pacific Islander and LGBTQ+ art, and engaged creatives in the social justice communities in the development of shareable art, and content in support of NEA and its affiliates.

NEA committed resources to partners in the creative community that uplift union principles across the United States and support local and state initiatives that are protect to our communities, educators, and students. We produced visual content and shared member stories that highlighted our voices at school board meetings where politicians are debating students' access to books.

Scaling and Training

Strategically implementing digital tools is critical to deliver on our mission, support our affiliates, and engage our members and advocates more easily and efficiently.

We leveraged these funds to grow capacity and skillsets through the following digital services:

- **Digital tools implementation:** We provided onboarding and ongoing support for enterprise digital tools including Hustle, Salesforce Marketing Cloud, EveryAction, and SproutSocial. We ensure affiliates know how best to use the tools to recruit new members, engage members and public education supporters, and mobilize activists to drive change.
- **Website hosting, support, and development:** We offer our world-class nea.org platform with support from staff with unique expertise and experience working with state and local NEA affiliates.
- **Digital tools platform selection:** We helped affiliates identify campaign goals and select the right tool to support that effort.

In addition, we continue to scale the nea.org/nea-affiliates platform, both onboarding new affiliate websites and launched new features to meet affiliate and audience needs, such as Members Only sections and calendars of events. To date, 15 state affiliates have launched their websites on the NEA platform: Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Oregon, Utah, and Vermont.

State Affiliate Advertising Assistance Program

When the NEA Representative Assembly established the NEA Media Campaign Fund, 20 percent of the available funds were earmarked for grants to state associations for advertising initiatives and/or expanding the reach and activities of existing state advertising efforts.

The NEA Representative Assembly also established a broad-based advisory group to decide how funds are spent and to create guidelines and criteria for making those decisions.

State Affiliate Advertising Assistance Advisory Group

- Gladys Marquez, NEA Executive Committee member, Illinois
- Nelly Ann Henjes, NEA Board of Directors, Florida
- Rachella Dravis, NEA Board of Directors, Iowa
- Megan Tuttle, president, New Hampshire
- Carrie Lucking, executive director, Minnesota
- Kynesha Brown, communications director, Alabama
- Keoki Kerr, communications director, Hawaii
- Kelly Hagen, communications director, North Dakota
- Ramona Oliver, senior director, NEA Center for Communications (Advisory Group chair)

Criteria, guidelines, and application forms are distributed annually to state association presidents, executive directors, NEA Board members, and state association communications directors. At the request of NEA state affiliates, the NEA State Media Advisory Group considers and approves grants in the NEA fiscal year in which the grant will be provided.

For the 2023 – 2024 NEA fiscal year, the Advisory Group reviewed 11 competitive grant applications submitted by 11 NEA state affiliates. Fund requests totaled \$3.734 million; \$3.242 million was available.

After careful review and a full debate, the Advisory Group fully or partially funded eight (8) proposals, totaling \$1.241 million. These funds were made available to state affiliates during the 2023 – 2024 NEA fiscal year. The remaining balance will carry over to next year.

NEA state affiliates that have received funding during the 2023 – 2024 budget year are:

KENTUCKY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$164,000
MAINE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$91,000
MISSOURI-NEA	\$60,000
NEBRASKA STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$285,000
NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS	\$200,000
NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS	\$400,000
OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$385,000
WYOMING EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$36,000
TOTAL APPROVED for FY2023 – 2024*	\$1,621,000

*After the printing of this report but before the conclusion of the 2023 – 2024 fiscal year, eight (8) applications requesting \$2.329 million are scheduled to be reviewed. Approvals will be recorded in the next report.

ENTERPRISE OPERATIONS

Enhancing NEA.org

NEA.org and affiliate sites on the platform are designed to demonstrate the value of membership, serve as a unifying voice for public educators, set a clear agenda for members, and position the union as a relevant and vital organization in the fight for public education.

There were 6.6 million visits to nea.org this past fiscal year, an increase of more than 4.1 percent compared to the previous year. Unpaid search engines like Google and Bing continue to be the largest driver of traffic, contributing over 50 percent of visits and growing by more than 500,000 visits year over year. Intentional work to rewrite content to succeed in search results has contributed to this growth and allowed us to achieve higher search rankings around topics like collective bargaining and Teacher Appreciation Week.

In August 2023 we launched a new online home for *NEA Today*, which better positions the magazine for a digital future. Between September 2023 and February 2024, the *NEA Today* section of the site received 1,675,140 pageviews, an increase of more than 16 percent compared to the previous year. In the same time, we recorded 4,998 file downloads, 3,213 visits to the Action Center from visitors who entered the site on *NEA Today*, and 1,535 email form signups, all from the *NEA Today* website. We've observed a consistent year-over-year increase in return visitors, suggesting that more users are turning to *NEA Today* as a regular news source.

Fifteen state affiliates now use our platform to house their website, with Utah, South Dakota, and Alaska among the recent additions. A survey conducted earlier this year found that the program has been a positive factor in building collaborative relationships with state affiliates. Ten of the 11 affiliates who responded said they were very satisfied with the support they received through this program, and that they would recommend the program to others. Nine said their affiliate was very likely to collaborate with NEA on future enterprise program offerings. Hosting affiliates on our platform helps standardize the membership funnel. We found that in the first six months of 2023, affiliates on our platform generated 25,000 visits from their sites to NEA's Join Now experience.

Offline to Online Engagements

We leveraged these funds to drive offline to online enhancements and test new content types in printed collateral, incentives to acquire data from key audiences to extend our reach.

Part of this effort includes developing a more comprehensive digital delivery for our long-form content. This will allow us more economical distribution methods, greater ability to measure our reach and eventually, to expand our non-dues revenue streams to more profitable modes.

Member Research

NEA continued to support state affiliates in listening to members' needs and support. This year, we supported more than a dozen state affiliates in member research. In addition, NEA fielded national member, parent, student, and activist surveys (including member surveys in two dozen states).

Media

NEA has prioritized lifting the voice of NEA leaders and members in the media to shape the narrative around public education and to advocate on behalf of students and our members. We have used satellite and radio media tours to connect with local and national media outlets on important topics like educator shortage, educator pay, and Teacher

Appreciation Week. We also have partnered with vendors and state affiliates to help increase member voices in the media to help shape the narrative around safety in schools, school funding, educator shortage, social and emotional health, educator pay, and other important topics. NEA has had major success in driving media coverage, and this work was key to that.

Finally, NEA will be sponsoring the Education Writers Association, the National Black Journalist Association, and the National Hispanic Journalist Association annual conferences, where reporters from outlets across the country congregate to learn about important topics and get to know NEA's leaders and staff who they can work with.



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